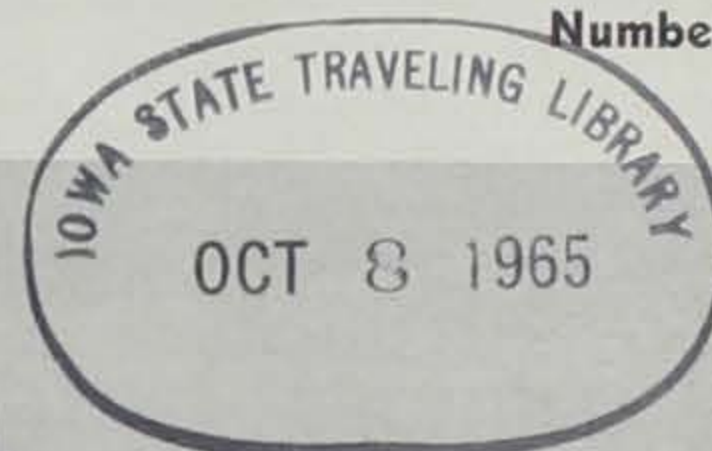


Volume 24

October, 1965

Number 10



A good dog coupled with good farmer-sportsmen relationships will guarantee hunting success.

Jim Sherman photo

# MR. RINGNECK — FALL '65

Eugene D. Klonglan  
Asst. Supt. of Biology

This fall, Iowa's pheasant population will present a "split personality" to more than a quarter million hunters who will take to the fields after the state's number one game species. During the past winter, severe weather in the north and the lack of the same in the south practically divided the state in two halves. Unfortunately for pheasants, the lack of good winter cover to protect them from bad weather is critical in the northern half of the state, and the birds in this region were forced to suffer the full brunt of two late season blizzards.

Pheasant hunters who tramp through the fields of northern Iowa in pursuit of the wily ringneck on opening day this fall will, in many cases, become aware of the effects of the severe storms that struck this area of the state. The pheasant population in this region, particularly northwestern and north central Iowa, suffered substantial losses. Mortality ran as high as 50 percent on at least one sizeable area. Some areas with poorer than average winter cover experienced higher death rates. Other areas with good winter cover had a much

smaller rate of loss. This difference will show itself to many hunters this fall. Those who regularly hunt on or near a farm that has very good winter cover will have better luck than those who usually hunt on farms with poorer protective cover.

Spring pheasant surveys made by State Conservation Commission field personnel confirmed the rates of winter mortality mentioned above. Counts of the number of crowing cocks heard and of the number of cocks and hens sighted were compared to the numbers heard and seen in the spring of 1964 and earlier years. These comparisons showed that not as many birds had succumbed in most areas as was first feared. Sufficient brood stock was present this spring to begin the task of rebuilding the population to the levels of former years.

Surveys taken late this summer to measure the success of this year's pheasant production showed that a satisfactory start was made on the rebuilding task. Although weather during the nesting season was not as favorable as it might have been in some areas, the remaining hens produced about as many young birds per hen as they did in the better than average seasons of the past two years. It is a biological principle

(Continued on page 80)



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CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE 53,234

**COMMISSION MINUTES**

September 7, 1965

Des Moines, Iowa

**FISH AND GAME**

Approval was given to exercise an option on 2 acres of land at a total cost of \$400.00 to give access to West Blue Lake in Monona County.

Approval was given to exercise an option on 5½ acres of land at a total cost of \$800.00 at Miami Lake site in Monroe County.

A permit was given to Miss Ortha Green to enable a legal transfer of a collection of mounted animals to the Wayne County Historical Society.

Approval was given to the establishment of inviolate waterfowl refuges from October 1 until the end of the waterfowl season on various lake and marsh areas.

**LANDS AND WATERS**

The Commission granted a permit for Ferry Landing Construction on the Mississippi River in Louisa County to be contingent upon certain specifications.

Approval was given to expenditure of capital improvement funds for land acquisition and development projects.

**GENERAL**

The Commission accepted a proposal submitted by the Iowa Conservation Education Council calling for construction, equipping and staffing of facilities for an all-weather Conservation Training Center.

The Commission discussed the Lake Manawa Road problem with Mr. A. B. Sorenson, State Highway Commission personnel and others to determine ways of possible new construction and future maintenance.

The Commission's progress in its portion of the Three Mile Watershed was reviewed for Senator Franklin Main and others.

Formal agreements between the Commission and the U. S. Corp of Engineers on development of Missouri River recreation complexes were deferred until further studies and investigations can be made.

The Commission voted to modify the current retirement policies

within the Commission so that they will conform to those recently adopted by the State Executive Council.

Travel requests were approved to the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Study Committee, Madison, Wisconsin; the International conference of Personnel Directors, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; the Wing Bee at Poynette, Wisconsin; Association of State Foresters, Houston, Texas; National Conference State Parks, Muskoka, Canada; and the Regional Forest Management meeting, Dixon, Illinois.

Informational items included a report on progress in obtaining a clear title to the recently acquired Noble's Island on the Mississippi; attempts to purchase surplus government property for use by the Commission; and a land-trade and option proposals on Dudgeon Lake in Benton County.

**FARMLAND RECREATION**

by Ernest Swift

**National Wildlife Federation**

Spiraling populations, greater mobility and increased recreational demands continue to bring new problems into sharp focus. Decisions now made will determine the trend of land-use and its availability for a long time to come.

Public domain is still free recreation range with the exception of improved campsites, national parks, monuments, etc., where fees are now being charged. Recent enabling legislation under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act has provided for a \$7 annual fee which allows people to enter and use any of these developed areas and facilities.

States employ various methods from charging to free access on lands they control. Nearly all charge for entrance to parks and improved campsites. Some charge for specific hunting and fishing areas, while others have gone into easement programs with landowners where the state pays an acreage fee and pays for any damages incurred in relation to public use.

When it comes to private lands, new trends are slowly forming. A hunting or fishing license does not allow trespass, but the states still own and control all resident game and, in the case of wetlands now being purchased by the Federal Government, access is part of the purchase. In many instances where wetlands are leased there is no access, and hunting, free or paid for, is determined by the landowner.

The Department of Agriculture has been encouraging landowners, especially farmers, to charge entrance fees, to raise some of their own game, to develop fish ponds, as a profit motive. And by the admittance of some of its repre-

**Conservation Forum**

Dear Editor:

I should like to pass along what I believe is a good idea as a result of the recent changes in the law pertaining to throw lines and set lines. It is now a requirement of the law that these lines be marked plainly with some sort of tag containing the name of the owner of the line and his address. I find that an out-dated plastic credit card with your name and address thereon makes a fine marker. The name of the company or organization on the credit card, of course, would be cut off and a hole punched in the plastic card. This is an ideal tag in my opinion. If you think it would be of any value to other readers, I pass it on for what it is worth.

R. L. N.

Iowa City, Iowa

Dear Editor:

In the past few years it has been the custom of our local P. T. A. (Parent-Teacher Association) to award a library book to the center whose attendance of parents at the meeting was the highest. This year we thought we

representatives, they are attempting to reverse the American traditions and impose the European system.

In the prairie states, where much of the Soil Bank program was put into operation, outside hunters, for the past several years, have questioned as to why they have to pay a trespass or hunting fee when, as tax-payers, they are contributing to the soil bank subsidy. As a voice of the hunter, this question was discussed in *Conservation News* sometime ago, and brought forth irate answers from some landowners. In their minds there was no room for debate; they owned the land, subsidy or no subsidy.

Some of the philosophies which seem to be taking hold for greater control by private landowners versus public hunting opportunities were recently discussed by Tom Kimball before the Subcommittee on Conservation and Credit, House Committee on Agriculture. He stated: "We propose that the Department of Agriculture be authorized to enter into contracts with farmers for additional cash incentives if they open their lands to public recreational use." Mr. Kimball emphasized that such a program should be voluntary, open only to those farmers willing to participate. He further stated: "We suggest that USDA be authorized to enter into cooperative agencies for administrative serv- mental wildlife or conservation agencies of administrative serv- ices."

This is something which hunters who have no special friends or relatives as landowners could well endorse.

might try something new and different. Recalling the interesting wildlife display that has appeared at different times throughout the state we wondered if we could have an animal to be cared for the winning school building for a few days following each meeting. We only have four meetings: Sep. 29, one in Nov., one in Jan. and one in March.

Mr. R. R.

Rock Rapids, Iowa

We received many requests throughout the year for a cage animals for schools, sports gatherings and many public functions. It is impossible for us to comply with all of these requests. We keep a number of animals at our Wildlife Research Station, Boone, Iowa. If we were to start delivering these animals to points of the state for exhibit purposes, the cost would be prohibitive.

We do have a large traveling exhibit which shows to many schools each year. We also have for smaller exhibits which we show at schools or other gatherings upon request—Ed.

However, there is nothing to stop the states from an aggressive program of leasing. Wisconsin has had substantial acreages under lease for public hunting for nearly thirty years. This is under a special statute, and the state assumes all landowner liabilities in connection with recreational public use. In all that span of operation the liability costs have been negligible. Such an arrangement has increased good relations between the landowners, the hunters and the Conservation Department. Instances of misunderstanding have been few and far between.

There is another factor which is rapidly gaining importance and interest. For years liability law have been discussed as an inducement to free hunting on private lands. In other words if a landowner allowed free hunting he would be held free of any accident that might happen to hunters or recreationists. Even lacking law in some states, over 90 percent of the 62,000,000 acres of industrial forest lands in the United States are open to various forms of recreation. This negates the rather common idea that most industrial forest lands are closed or that hunters are unwelcome. In this instance, forest fires have always been the chief concern in dry seasons—that and the destruction of roads in the rainy seasons. With farmers, it is fences, the tramping of crops, the possible killing of livestock, and fire.

Many hunters seem to feel that a liability law would answer all problems, but it is not hard to find attorneys who are skeptical.

(Continued on page 75)



## CHOOSE YOUR DEER STAND CAREFULLY

Ron Schara

"I would've gotten my deer if only . . ." is a favorite phrase loaned by unsuccessful bow hunters. Lament if you must, but remember, a new season opens later this month. Now is the time to take a long, close look at why you were in the majority of deer-less places in the past.

As any seasoned archer knows, it's not hard to end the season without getting a deer. There are many reasons for lack of success—too many, in fact, to discuss here; but before you climb back into the tree stand this fall, let's examine your elevated perch and see if it could be the source of your hunting blues.

Two of the most important requirements for a good tree stand location and comfort. The tree should be located in an area where deer are active; and a deer trail is the most logical place for action. Ideally it will be situated between a food source and bedding area. Deer seem to prefer such natural trails as dry creek beds, old logging roads, cattle trails, hill tops and/or natural depressions on the side of a hill. If possible, the tree should be located at trail "intersections" to give better odds for deer use.

Once a good tree is located along a trail, there is still one important question the hunter has to answer: Will deer use the trails during the hunting hours? It's disquieting, to say the least, to fail to see any deer while hunting yet to find evidence of deer activity which was there during the night.

Give your new tree stand about a week's trial period. Be in the tree during both the morning and evening deer movement periods. If after such a trial no deer are seen, you'd better move to another tree on a different trail. However, move only after you are positive

that the deer use the area during night hours exclusively.

There may be times when you'll see deer quite often, only to be followed by periods when no deer will be seen. This is apparently a normal situation. Although deer are creatures of habit and move consistently from one area to another, they may not always take the same route. If you remain constant, that is, in one place, eventually deer will use your trail again. On the other hand, if you continually move your stand, you could move from one trail to another and never see the deer that use the area.

A golden rule for any deer hunter is . . . **no movement**. A deer apparently has an uncanny ability to spot "unnatural" movement. The leaves and tree limbs can bounce to the wind all day, but move your arm or leg and a deer will see it. Smokers often ask, "Should I smoke while deer hunting?" Their main fear is that the

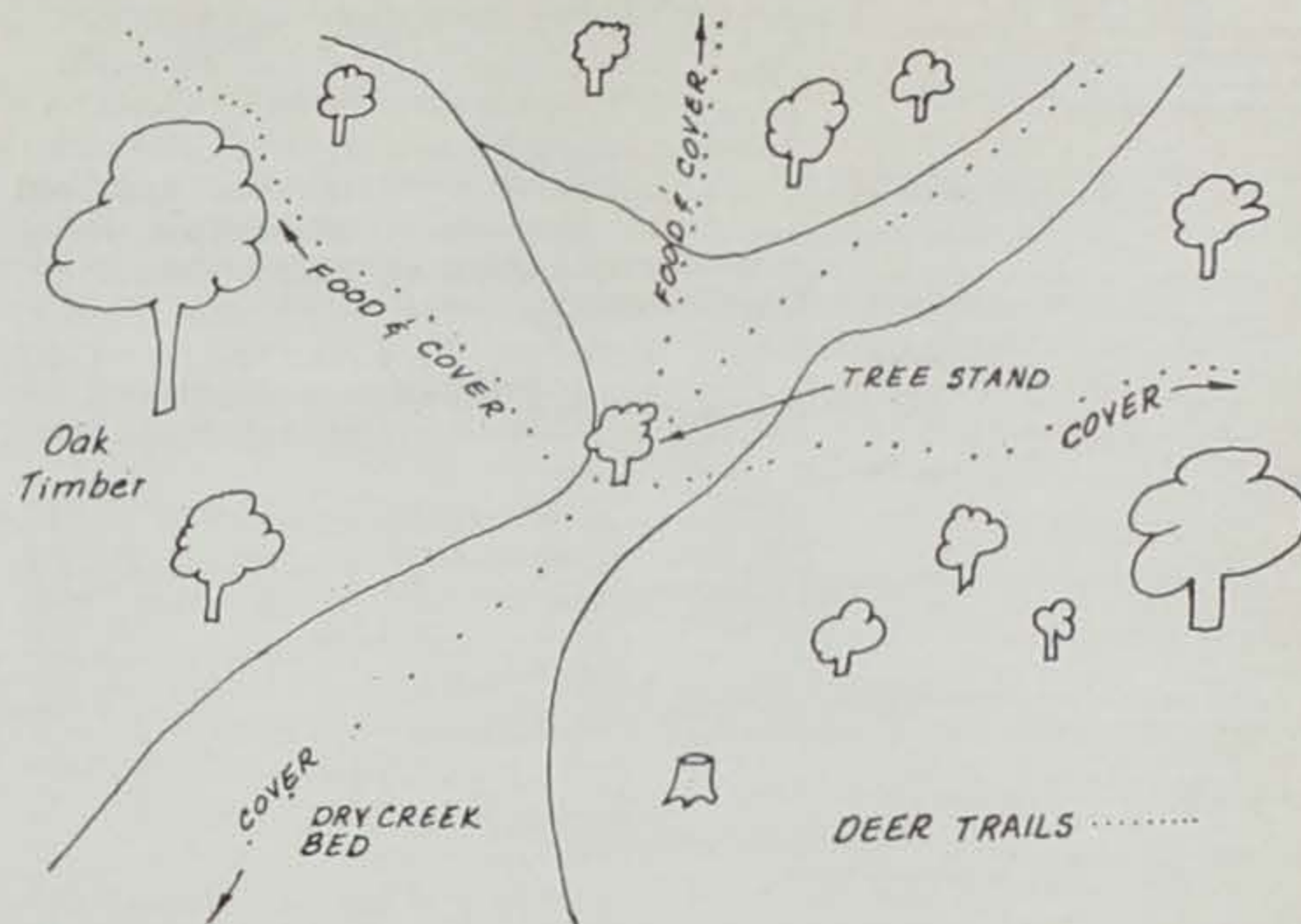


Jack Kirstein photo  
Pre-season practice shots can be a deciding factor.

smoke odor will give them away. If deer can smell cigarette smoke, they can smell you, too. It's the movement of the smoker's arm from his face to his side that is the real signal which says "Here I am!"

Lots of movement can be reduced if your deer stand is comfortable to sit in. Not comfortable to the extent you'll fall asleep; but comfortable enough so that your legs can rest easy, and your body will be in a position to draw the bow. Naturally comfortable tree stands are hard to come by, so often you must "customize" the stand for comfort.

A handy seat can be made by notching a three-quarters or inch board at both ends and placing it in the crotch of a tree. If the tree limbs do not lend themselves as natural foot rests, build them. By all means, make the stand comfortable enough so that you can sit motionless for long periods of time without having to shift your



This illustration shows the "ideal" location that a bow hunter looks for during his pre-season scouting. Odds for sighting deer from stands located at trail intersections are much better than stands located elsewhere.

weight, straighten your leg or otherwise announce your presence.

Another common mistake made by some archers is that they fail to anticipate and practice possible shots from their stands. Do some preliminary target practice from the tree before the season opens. In this way, you can tell which branches or brush will block your shot or deflect your arrow. Draw the bow from different angles so you'll know what directions you can shoot without interference to your draw arm.

Many are the archers who have failed to do this and found to their

dismay that any opportunity to score was doomed to failure. When you have to shoot from an unnatural position or with interference from the stand itself, your chances of a hit are drastically reduced.

As a bow hunter you have already placed yourself on an equal footing with your quarry, so it makes no sense to shift the odds even more in favor of the deer. Remember, the key word for a bowman is **THINK**. And the time to do your thinking is long before you come to that moment of truth during the hunting season.

## FARMLAND RECREATION—

(Continued from page 74)

such laws. They contend that, in spite of the enactment of liability laws, injury to either the hunter or landowner or destruction of property could become subject to court review.

Model liability laws are now being circulated among the states but, if passed, their value will eventually have to be determined by the courts. And, according to their provisions, the various state courts might well make different rulings.

If the states at this point would enact laws for the leasing of public hunting grounds and assume damage costs which might accrue to landowners, they well could coordinate their efforts with any federal subsidy laws which might open private lands to recreation.

The leasing of private lands for public hunting has now been tried for several decades and it works. One state, at least, guarantees to pay any damages which might accrue to the landowners. That has proved to be a very minor cost item. Now is the time for outdoorsmen to help determine whether they wish to insure modified forms of the American traditions or sit back and watch the European system take over.

What is decided now will affect the trend of recreation in America for all times.

## PLEASANT VALLEY RETREAT

Three miles east and two miles south of the town of Redfield is an area recently acquired by the State Conservation Commission. Pleasant Valley, so named by the Gibler family years ago, is 145 acres of quiet retreat. The state bought this land from the Gibler's in 1963. They plan to leave it in its natural state.

In 1896 William Gibler acquired land from Lydia Cotton. In 1899 and 1906 he acquired more land bringing the total to 250 acres. One hundred and forty-five acres were sold to the state. They border the South Raccoon, and the hillsides are thickly timbered with scrub oak and other hardwood trees. Fishing can be done here but this is primarily a hunting area, one of the best in this part of the state. Squirrel, rabbit, coon and deer are available in season. It is a perfect spot for nature study, bird watching and hiking.

This place will have a strong appeal for the select few who want to rough it for a while, or just relax in solitude.

—LaNelle Heskett, Redfield, Iowa.

The panda has the face of a raccoon, feet like a cat and body similar to that of a bear.



Jack Kirstein photo  
Homemade and handy, a notched board helps ease a long wait.



## HOW DID IOWA HUNTERS DO LAST YEAR (1964-65)

Species	Statewide Bag	Number Hunting This Species	Percent of All Hunters Hunting Species	Total Hours Hunted	Total Hunting Trips Made	Average Trips Per Season	Average Hours Per Season	Average Hours Per Trip	Average Bagged Per Season	Average Bagged Per Trip	Average Bagged Per Hour	Average Hours Bagged On Animals
Pheasant	1,737,400	271,285	88%	5,248,600	1,435,700	5.3	19.2	3.6	6.4	1.2	0.33	3.0
Cottontail	2,260,090	179,585	58%	2,976,140	1,105,195	6.2	16.9	2.8	12.6	2.1	0.74	1.3
Squirrel	1,111,290	136,415	44%	1,840,620	638,415	4.7	13.5	2.9	8.2	1.7	0.60	1.7
Quail	291,030	46,535	15%	537,350	139,505	3.0	11.5	3.8	6.3	2.1	0.55	1.8
Raccoon	268,560	27,975	9%	598,950	181,275	6.4	21.4	3.3	9.6	1.5	0.45	2.2
Waterfowl*	483,315	55,460	18%	1,685,620	390,800	7.2	31.1	4.3	—	1.1	0.14	6.9
(Ducks)	(434,590)	(55,270)	(18%)									
(Geese)	(27,575)	(9,225)	(3%)									
(Coot)	(15,930)	(2,830)	(1%)									
(Snipe)	(5,220)	(1,800)	(1%)									
Foxes and Coyotes	91,550	58,685	19%	1,210,670	301,640	5.1	20.6	4.0	1.6	0.3	0.08	13.2
Jackrabbit	97,785	31,815	10%	286,960	108,310	3.4	9.0	2.6	3.1	0.9	0.34	2.9
Hungarian Partridge	7,000	(No good estimate since most are shot by pheasant hunters)										
Deer**—Gun	9,025	20,000	7%	276,680	42,530	2.1	13.8	6.6	0.5	0.2	0.03	30.6
Bow	670	3,700	1%	184,100	49,210	13.3	49.7	3.7	0.2	0.01	0.004	274.7
All Hunters	9,695	23,700	8%	460,780	91,740	4.0	19.4	5.2	0.4	0.1	0.01	47.5
GRAND TOTALS	6,357,715	310,000	8%	14,845,690	4,392,580	14.2	47.9	3.4	20.5	1.4	0.43	2.3
		301,650 Residents										
		8,350 Nonresidents										
		Licensed Hunters										

\*Waterfowl figures on statewide bag and number and percent of hunters broken down by ducks-geese-coot-snipe categories; no attempt to break rest of data down separately because of overlap due to all or most being hunted at same time.

\*\*Deer figures obtained from special deer hunter report card required from licensed hunters plus estimates for nonlicensed landowners and/or operators obtained from separate source.

### Principles of Game Management: Part Four STOCKING

John Madson and Ed Koziacky

Game stocking is man's effort to increase a game supply on a range by obtaining game elsewhere and releasing it on that range.

This principle of game management was most prevalent in this country between 1930 and 1950, when many state game farms poured pen-reared game into areas where existing game supplies could not meet the demands of hunting. Impressive stocking statistics were compiled and released each year by state game departments—"numerical evidence" of an effective game management effort. But many of these early stocking programs were unsuccessful, and great numbers of game birds and animals were stocked with no visible increase in autumn game supplies.

In such cases, man tried to second-guess Nature and beat her at her own game. But Nature herself normally overstocks her game range; large numbers of game are born into an area each breeding season, but fatal "limiting factors" usually trim this bumper spring crop until it is in harmony with the capacity of the game range to support it.

A game habitat is capable of supporting just so much game and no more. Good range can usually support a large game population; poor range can support only a small game crop, if any. Every game habitat has a limited capacity for game, and if man introduces game beyond that capacity, the stocked game simply evaporates from the habitat.

Game supplies can be depleted by severe weather but can recover automatically when conditions improve. Although stocking may hasten that recovery, it is usually unnecessary on good game range. On a southern Iowa game area, a severe winter resulted in a spring quail population of only 90 birds. This increased to 501 birds by fall. Two years later—with good weather—the fall population has risen to 2,316 quail. Nature's method of restocking a receptive habitat was sufficient.

On the other hand, a suitable habitat may be empty of game and cannot be stocked by nature because of distance or physical barriers. In parts of Pennsylvania, the wild turkey was nearly extinct for many years because of broad changes that civilization had caused in the original forest. But through the years, that forest matured from a grouse-deer habitat to a squirrel-turkey habitat and when the proper forest stage finally involved, turkeys were successfully restocked by man.

In some areas, suitable game range still exists but the original breeding stock has been extirpated. Under modern protective law, original game can often be successfully stocked in these areas. This

has resulted in the re-establishment of beaver, antelope, deer and wild turkey in many parts of their original ranges.

But indiscriminate stocking in inadequate habitat is often a waste of time and money. Such stocking may not only fail to increase game supplies, but may divert money from valuable management programs. In Indiana, it's been estimated that each stocked quail that survives and is bagged by the hunter costs \$40. In Michigan, each summer-stocked pheasant bagged by hunters costs about \$16.50. The story is much the same in other states; wholesale game stocking usually results in retail birds.

Game stocking is most practical:

1. When a good game habitat has been depopulated by severe weather or other temporary factors.
2. When such a habitat is suitable for game species that does not exist there, or near there.
3. When a small game range is heavily stocked and heavily hunted shortly after stocking.

The last may be a state-operated public hunting area, a form of subsidized hunting that can provide good shooting on a limited game range for a short time. In many states, however, these "put-and-take" shooting areas are being replaced by commercial shooting preserves that can be operated by private individuals at a profit. Private enterprise has always been more efficient than public agencies, and in this case it protects state game departments from the criticism of "playing favorites" among license holders—an inequity of hunting opportunities that no public game agency can justify.

A basic weakness of stocking is that a pen-reared bird is usually expected to survive in an environment that is too hostile for even the wild birds that were born there. In many cases, it is more effective to trap and transplant wild game from areas of high population. Although even wild game is at a disadvantage when not on its native range, it may have a better chance of survival than pen-reared game.

A few state game departments, knowing the pitfalls of haphazard stocking, are trying to develop strains of game birds better adapted for survival in the areas where they are most needed. Most of these studies are being conducted at experimental centers such as the one at Poyette, Wisconsin; the Delmar Station in Ohio; and the State Wildlife Research Center in Iowa.

Much interest hinges on these studies, for although it is seldom practical to improve game habitat on a grand scale, it may be possible to breed strains of game that can survive in the existing range if the short-comings of that range are within the tolerance limits of the game species.



## TO THE YOUNG HUNTER

Ron Schara

Welcome to your first hunting season. You are, indeed, a special person. Dad, big brother or a friend has chosen you to join in the field with thousands of other hunters. Within this group of men, you will find hunters from all walks of life. Most of them would make excellent hunting partners . . . a few would not! For the sake of hunting, be in the majority; learn to be a "good hunter."

How do you become a "good hunter"? A good hunter is a combination of several qualities. Some of these qualities include your knowledge of the out-of-doors, your marksmanship, your "field" manners, etc. However, some other qualities begin at home and have nothing to do with how often you hunt or how much success you have.

One such quality which should be with you on your first hunt this fall is gun safety! Gun safety should be a matter of habit. No matter how well you know your game; no matter how well you shoot—nothing matters if you are dangerous to be with or a danger to yourself. Learn gun safety or stay home!

### RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY

Another quality of a good hunter is—respect for private land. Much of your hunting will be spent on land owned by others. Most of these landowners will be happy to have you as a hunting guest . . . IF YOU ASK PERMISSION FIRST. You will undoubtedly meet some hunters who feel it is unnecessary to ask for permission to hunt on private land. The state's trespassing laws are meant for such people, and they will learn the hard way. But unfortunately the damage they've done to farmer-sportsman relationships might be irreparable and another "NO HUNTING" sign may be the result. The future of hunting on private land depends on the extermination of these thoughtless, selfish marauders.

Another lesson you must learn is that there are some people who are against the sport of hunting. They call it "cruel," "inhuman," "killing for pleasure" and many other emotional names. They do not seem to recall that in days past the hunting skills of their fathers and grandfathers often determined if there would be food on their table. There were no supermarkets in those days and hunting was a means of survival. True, that situation does not exist today, but the inborn urge to hunt is still with us. However, now because hunting is not needed for survival, the hunter has often been called a killer. There is a difference between a hunter and a killer and it can be summed up in one word—RESPECT!

A hunter respects the animal he hunts, a killer does not.

What does respect mean?

Respect means you have engaged in a contest, the hunter against the hunted. In any such contest someone wins and someone loses. Many times you will be on the losing side. This is as it should be. The sport of hunting would disappear if the hunter were assured of success on every outing. It is the challenge that keeps him coming back. A

killer is a man who can't accept defeat. He shoots anything and everything and somehow he has gotten the idea he's entitled to do this. His actions clearly indicate he kills for the sake of killing and isn't hunting for the sake of the challenge.

Respect means you know the animal you hunt. Learn his habits, what he eats, where he lives and most important why he lives and what part he plays in the drama of life.

Respect does not mean you do not kill. Death is inevitable to all forms of life. Although a hunter hunts and kills the very thing he admires, he is also the first one concerned with the animal's continued existence. It is a strange paradox.

Respect also means you abide by the game laws and limits. Game limits are your privilege, not a guarantee. Limits serve to divide the available game as equally as possible among the hunting public. The limit of enjoyment has no ceiling, but game limits do. Remember, of all your fond memories of hunting experiences, those which you will remember first will be the observations and knowledge you experienced; the first time you obtained your bag limit of squirrels or pheasants will long be forgotten.

Sometime in your conversations with friends, someone is going to ask, "How can you shoot those cute little animals?" A good answer to this would be, "Because they'll die anyway." Despite all of the cute pictures and movies they've seen of deer, squirrels, rabbits, etc., in a nice quiet setting; nature is not cute all of the time, nor is she gentle. Life, whether in the woods or in a city, is a fight for survival. Yes, they've seen cute pictures, but what they didn't see is the deer starving to death or the rabbit dying of disease. Death by a bullet is no worse. And, too, if the hunter shoots only what he can use, his kill goes on the dinner table and is not wasted.

There is a great annual turnover in all of nature's creatures. For example, a spring quail population usually will be reduced to a third of what it was at the end of the previous summer. Winter weather, lack of protective cover, predation, disease, starvation, accidents, etc., are all factors which will lower all game population regardless if they are hunted by man or not. Deer starve by the thousands in Wisconsin each year. If their hunting regulations were less strict, these deer could well be in a hunter's deep freeze at home. Nature overproduces each year to insure that some stock will be left for next spring. In realizing wise-use of a renewable natural resource, man might as well skim the excess of nature's overproduction. He does this by hunting.

The path of a good hunter is not easy. It calls on your self-control, common sense, and due respect. However, a hunter's path is an enjoyable path and your first step in the right direction begins this fall on "opening day."

## SHOOTING IS CONSERVATION, TOO!

William E. Towell, Director  
Missouri Conservation Commission

This title is sure to offend many conservationists, for some dedicated naturalists abhor the thought of killing for sport. We are experiencing a wave of national "protectionist" thinking and writing in the wildlife field. It is time for someone to speak out in defense of the hunter.

But, first, let's get hunting and fishing into perspective from my viewpoint—that of a state conservation director. An agency like mine has as its first responsibility the wildlife resources themselves. We must guard every species against abuse and possible extinction. This applies to non-game species as well as huntable game. Only after we have assurances for the welfare of the animals themselves can we consider opportunities for hunters to harvest some of the surplus.

Conservation, by generally accepted definition, means wise use, but in some instances it may mean total protection. The prairie chicken in Missouri, for example, has been reduced almost to museum species status by land use. Unless there is an unexpected land management revolution, we can expect no more than for this wild bird barely to hang on in scattered remnants of the prairie. Yet, we are spending hunters' license dollars for the prairie chicken. We think such expenditures are justified. We will continue to buy or lease native prairie where it can be preserved at a price within our budget. We feel a similar obligation for other wild species that may never be hunted—songbirds, scarce varieties of waterfowl, or even the black bear that is struggling for a foothold in the Ozarks.

A second responsibility, but only after our first obligation has been met, is to the sportsman. It is our job to provide hunting and fishing, for in some cases harvest is essential to game management. You may think the killer morally wrong, but he is biologically right! Also, hunting and fishing for fun are a part of American tradition. They can be good, clean outdoor recreation of the highest quality. It is our job to provide that harvest opportunity—within safe limits of wildlife conservation.

It is our further responsibility to prescribe and enforce certain fair methods of wildlife harvest. Fish may be in abundance but it is no

(Continued on page 79)



Jim Sherman photo

### COUPLE DONATE ISLAND

Mr. and Mrs. William E. Noble of Oelwein recently presented a 40 acre island in the Mississippi River to the State Conservation Commission. Commission Chairman, Ed Weinheimer, accepted the gift for the people of Iowa and said, "We gladly accept. This is something we don't have happen too often."

The island, located near the town of Waukon Junction, rises high above the Mississippi. It now has a summer home, boat dock, artesian well and roads on it. Eventually, public access will be made and maintained by the Commission.



## ALL HAIL THE WHITE BILL

Mrs. E. F. Rankin

The lowly mud hen or coot has experienced a change in name status in the conservation world. It is reported by a local sportsman that it will no longer be called such unglamorous names, but will now be known as the White Bill.

Although there is a closed and open season on these waterfowl as well as a bag limit, they are usually used as targets or left alone with the remark, "Oh, those are just mud hens."

What a long time they have borne the name of mud hen or

compares them with her own dull plumage.

The young birds soon lose their colors and assume the sooty gray plumage of the adults which is worn for the rest of their lives.

The name, White Bill, is appropriate, for the bill is white except for a blackish ring near the tip. There is a bare white patch on the forehead and some breeds have a red spot on the forehead.

Their feet are not webbed, but each toe is fringed by a symmetrically scalloped web to make swimming and walking over ooze easier.

They weigh up to two pounds and are 13-16 inches in length.



White bills readily identify the mud hen.

Jim Sherman photo

coot, either of which would make a person go to court for a change. Even a human being doesn't want to be called a coot which means a common or stupid fellow.

The newly named White Bill belong to the family of rails. In the Old World, it is hunted for food, especially in the winter. The breast, if properly cooked, at least approaches the taste of wild duck.

The nests are made on mounds in the rushes on a sluggish stream or in a boggy marsh. The eggs are gray and completely covered with black speckles. They are 8-14 in number which is far more than ducks lay.

Lincoln once said, "God must love the common people. He made so many of them!" And so perhaps it is with the humble mud hen or White Bill.

They seem to form a moving background for the stately Pelican or the brilliantly colored Mallards or the Snow Geese. They finish the picture, yet are never remembered.

They are the garbage men of a body of water. They eat the dead fish and other decaying animal life, thus helping to keep the waters clean and the air fresh. Ducks usually will not touch such refuse and can thank their lowly friends for their clean-up campaigns.

The young have jet black down with heads colored a bright orange scarlet varied with purple hue. All mothers think their babies beautiful, but surely Mother White Bill must admire her babies as she

They swim with a pumping motion of the neck.

White Bills are capable of long and sustained flight, but like to conceal themselves among the reeds to escape observation, taking wing only when they must. They are expert swimmers and can dive and swim for long distances under water. In fact, when wounded, they clutch the weeds at the bottom of the lake or marsh.

They are rare on the North Atlantic coast, and winter in southern United States.

So hail to the newly named White Bills! May they forget their former name and swim and dive and fly with pride!

—Fort Dodge Messenger

## SQUIRREL STEW

Because squirrel meat is lean and tender, it makes delicious eating in any number of ways. Even the strictly beef-and-fowl eater has been known to succumb to the tempting taste of squirrel stew.

To begin squirrel stew, clean the meat thoroughly, remove from the bone, and cut in cubes or strips. Roll the pieces of meat in flour and brown slowly in a small amount of fat. Turn occasionally to brown on all sides.

Because squirrel meat has a sweet taste of its very own, season sparingly with dashes of salt, pepper, thyme, paprika, parsley, Worcestershire sauce, cayenne and 2 tablespoons of vinegar. Add between ½ to 1 cup of water, barely

## DISPLACED GROUSE

Max Schnepf

Twelve ruffed grouse, live trapped in the Yellow River Forest, Allamakee County, were released recently in the Shimek State Forest in Lee County to initiate the re-establishment phase of a State Co-



With a blur of wings, two ruffed grouse take-off to explore their new home in Shimek State Forest.

Jim Sherman photo

servation Commission study of these little upland game birds. Conservation Commission personnel hope to release at least 40 grouse in the southeast Iowa forest during the next few months.

The Commission's ruffed grouse study, outlined in 1960, had three objectives. The first objective, which was to determine the range and population densities of grouse in Iowa, has received the concentrated effort of Commission over the past five years, and although this objective has been met for all practical purposes, survey work is scheduled to continue on existing grouse populations in northeast Iowa. (See THE RUFFED GROUSE IN IOWA, IOWA CONSERVATIONIST, June 1965, page 47.)

The second objective or re-establishment phase of the study actually began earlier this summer when a bait trapping program was started in the Yellow River Forest area. Trapping efforts were unsuccessful, however, until mid-August when the "young of the year" began leaving the parent birds. As soon as this annual turn-over began, trapping success picked up, and 20 grouse were captured in a period of two weeks. Those birds not released in the Shimek area have been taken to the Commission's Research and Exhibit Station at the Ledges State Park near Boone.

Conservation Commission personnel plan to continue bait trapping through this fall and may attempt to bait grouse into the wire trap this winter also.

The 8,100 acre Shimek Forest was chosen as the first grouse release site because it is the finest potential grouse habitat in Iowa other than the extreme northeast corner of the state where grouse already exist. Grouse were reported in Lee and Van Buren Counties as late as the 1920's and early 1930's.

During the first decades of this century, however, timber and its protective understory were cut and grazed until grouse habitat was eliminated. And the little upland game birds, of course, went too.

In the last 10 or 20 years, timber on areas like the Shimek Forest has been allowed to grow back. Grazing has been prohibited, and selective cutting of trees has provided interspersed clearings in the timber. Quality grouse habitat is available once more.

Research in other states has indicated that at least 40 birds should be released in an area where an attempt is being made to re-establish grouse population. If and when a sufficient number of grouse are released in the Shimek Forest and the birds "take," a similar program will begin in Stephens State Forest in Lucas and Monroe Counties.

covering the meat. Cover and simmer until meat is tender, allowing one to three hours for cooking. Add potatoes, carrots, peas, chopped onions, cut celery, corn niblets, and mushrooms (optional) a half hour before the meat is done. Cook until the vegetables are tender.

But what is squirrel stew without thick brown gravy to finish your masterpiece? Remove the

meat and vegetables from the pot and put into a heated dish. Mix 2 tablespoons of flour and 1 cup of water. Add this mixture into the pot slowly, stirring constantly until sauce thickens. Pour gravy over the stew and Ole! You have become the creator of a tempting taste-satisfying treat called Ardine Casuel... Buen apetito!

—Winchester Proo



## SHOOTING IS CONSERVATION, TOO!

(Continued from page 77)

challenge to take them with dynamite. Deer are "dead ducks" under spotlight at night; turkeys can be wiped out if hunted and taken from their roosts. Even though harvest may be within safe limits biologically, such methods must be prohibited. The hunter using methods that are too easy has an unfair advantage over both the game and his fellow hunters who are entitled to an equal chance at the harvest.

We must maintain a code of conservation ethics if we are to continue hunting and fishing as acceptable outdoor pursuits. Emphasis nowadays must be placed upon the sport, not the bag. State wildlife agencies recognize growing pressures on dwindling game supplies—dwindling not because of hunting but because of habitat destruction. Whenever possible we add shooting or fishing days in preference to larger bag limits. Quality can be maintained in game harvest, but it must be guarded continually by wildlife administrators. To encourage or permit the use of unsporting methods threatens the very sport itself. Abuses have spawned this very preservation movement which we are now experiencing.

But, killing can be good conservation—provided surplus game is available and is harvested in a gentlemanly manner. To appreciate this philosophy a basic wildlife principle must be understood. Most wildlife produces more young than the environment can support. This is nature's protection for all its creatures. The over-production or surplus is lost in nature by death in many forms—predation, disease, winter kill, accident, starvation and even stress mortality brought on by overcrowding.

For example, bobwhite quail have an annual turnover of about 85 percent. Of all the birds produced during a summer breeding season, even if not a single shot is fired, only 15 percent will be alive to reproduce the following spring. The lost 85 percent is the surplus from which hunters can take their harvest. Not all of it will fall to the gun, of course, because natural mortality factors will still reap their toll. But the earlier in the fall that the hunting season opens, the more of the surplus man can take ahead of nature's harvest.

Quick sure death by the gun can be more humane than lingering starvation or being eaten alive by predators. No one who understands nature's ways of keeping game populations in balance with their environment will condemn the hunter. He is taking only what will be lost, anyway. Death to the majority within the year is inevitable: the surplus cannot be stored. It will not last through another year. The principle is true for all high turnover species like rabbits, squirrels, doves or pheasants.

But, there are other benefits of sport fishing and hunting. Not to be taken lightly is the total conservation effort paid for with license dollars. For many years the hunter and fisherman has financed conservation activities not directly benefitting hunting and fishing. Take away the sports of angling and gunning, and you wipe out funds now supporting stream and watershed protection, pollution control, soil conservation, and game research and management activities vital to many species of wildlife never taken for sport.

Probably nothing has done more for songbirds in Missouri than a statewide multiflora rose planting program over a period of the past ten or fifteen years—paid for by license buyers. State and national conservation organizations are supported largely by the hunters and fishermen or organized local clubs. These people who enjoy "taking" wildlife do not scorn those whose beliefs differ, but they resent being condemned by those who think it wrong to kill. After all, they know the "takers" have been putting up the cash that has supported most conservation efforts.

*Editor's note: The concluding portion of this article will be printed in a subsequent issue of the CONSERVATIONIST.*

To buy an air mattress that fits your needs, remember to measure the length and width while it is inflated. A deflated mattress appears much larger.

To carry milk in your camping cooler, pour it into plastic jugs. cardboard milk cartons often soak up water and the seals are loosened creating leakage.

Save the heavy paper bags from self-service ice machines to make handy moisture-resistant garbage sacks while camping.

It is NOT true that all mushrooms with pink gills are safe to eat!

The tiny bat has a big appetite. It will eat a quarter of its weight at one meal and more than half of its weight every night.

Hardwood trees burn with a hotter and longer lasting flame and form a better bed of coals than softwood trees.

Resinous softwoods (pines, etc.) make a good kindling for starting fires. However, they are smoky, short-lived and prone to throw sparks.

After a rainstorm, use birch wood for your campfire. It doesn't soak up moisture like other woods do.

## GREASING TRAILER WHEEL HUBS

You can usually spot an expert pleasure boater by the condition of his trailer. He knows that a full summer's run afloat can depend on a reliable trailer—one whose tires, wheels and bearings have been properly serviced.

Trailer wheel bearings need to be cleaned and repacked periodically, but particularly before starting a long trip or after the wheels have been submerged in water.

There's a correct way to do the job of greasing wheel hub bearings, say the Mercury people. Whether you do it yourself or have it done for you, here's how it should be done.

When pulling hubs off the axles, do so gently. Turn them a little to help the grease retainers slide off without harming their working edges.

Wash the removed bearings in a petroleum solvent and wipe old grease from the hub interiors with a cloth. Inspect the cleaned bearings and races for signs of wear or corrosion, taking care to keep out grit and dirt.

Remember, after trailering for any distance, the bearings become very hot. A dunking in cold water will either crack them, or at the least, the swift cooling and contraction will suck in water.

There are various kinds of greases available, so be sure to get one that is clearly labeled for

wheel bearings. Put about a spoonful of grease in the palm of one hand and "bite into it" with the bearing cages to push the grease in between the rollers.

Next, put a layer of grease around the inside of the hub bores. Don't fill hubs completely because when they warm up on the road, excess pressure will build up behind the seals.

After re-installing hubs and wheels, tap dust caps on carefully, making sure they go on straight and fit snugly.

A high-speed bearing failure will cause your trailer to start swaying. Listen for squeaky wheels, and each time you stop see if the hubs feel hot. Both are danger signs.

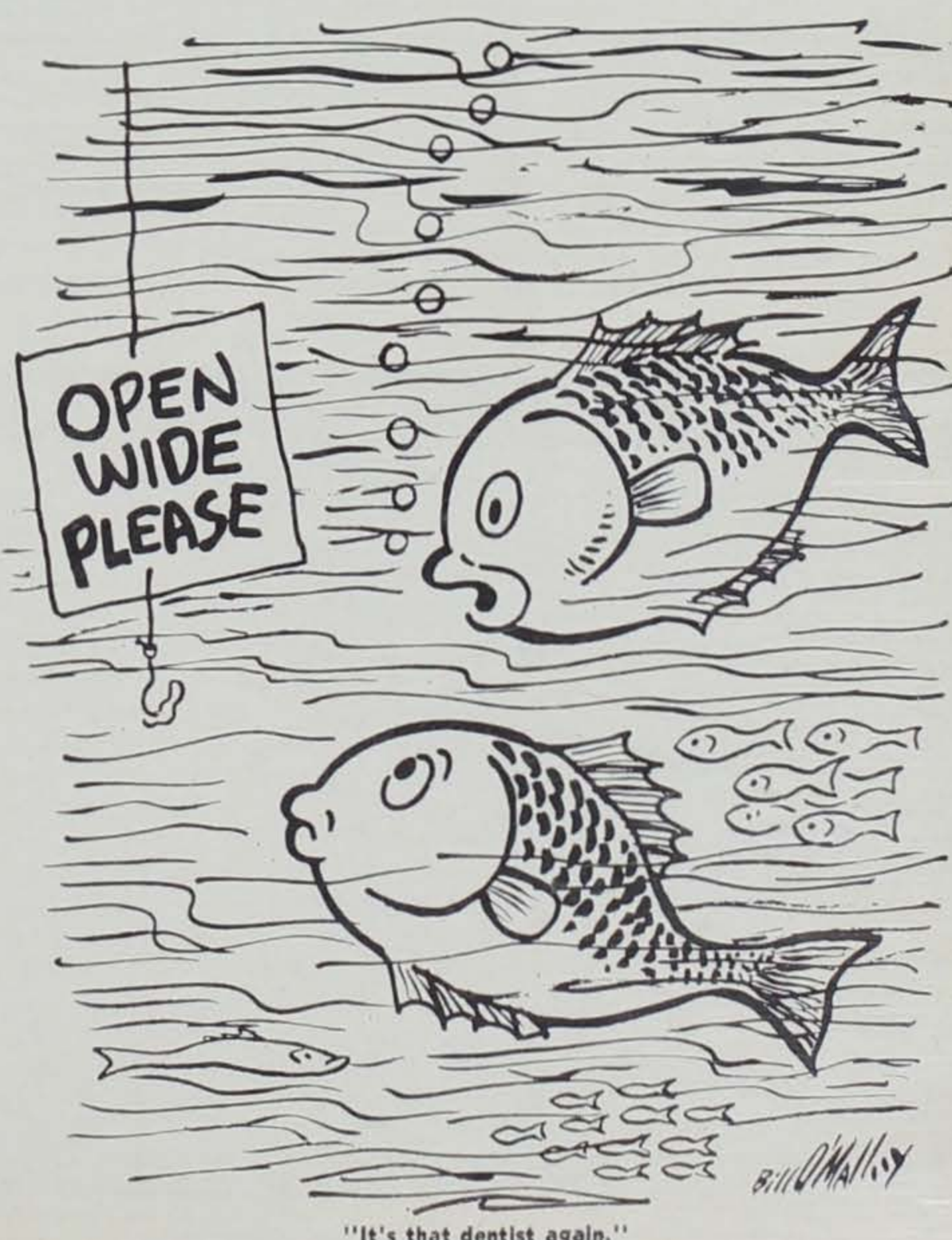
Do the job right and leave bearing worries behind as you travel to your favorite boating waters!

## BEGINNER'S BASIC

Most lead bullets fired in rifles or pistols have to be lubricated with a grease or wax placed on their surface or in their grooves to prevent their leading the bore.

Outside lubricated cartridges have the lubricant placed on the surface of the bullet outside the case. For example, most 22 Rim-fire cartridges.

Inside lubricated cartridges have the lubricant placed in the grooves or cannelures of the bullet where it is covered by the neck of the case. For example, pistol cartridges.



"It's that dentist again."



**MR. RINGNECK—FALL '65—**

(Continued from page 73)

that the rate of production tends to be higher when populations are low, and there apparently was a trend in that direction among northern Iowa pheasants this summer.

Fortunately, not all of Iowa experienced the St. Patrick's Day blizzard and other snow storms that swept across the northern part of the state. The late summer surveys showed no significant change in pheasant number over most of the southern half of the state. Very good populations will be found in some areas, particularly in parts of southwest, west central and east central Iowa. A slight population decline was recorded in a few areas. This was probably due to unfavorable spring weather in these localities. Some parts of extreme southern Iowa even showed increases, but the over-all number of birds in this area generally remains at too low a level to encourage pheasant hunting on an extensive scale.

When the late summer survey figures from both halves of the state were combined, it was found that the 1965 Iowa fall pheasant population will be a little over one-third less than that of 1964 or 1963. The latter two years were the best pheasant hunting season in recent years. But when this year's statewide population level is compared to the long-term average, the difference is not so great. For example, the average number of pheasants sighted per mile on the late summer surveys this year was only about 15 percent below the average for the period from 1954 to 1964. Counts during some years have actually been lower than those made this summer. Iowa's pheasant population is not in as precarious a position as it was originally thought to be by some people.

However, statewide figures illustrating long-term trends in pheasant numbers cannot be applied directly to all regions of the state. There have been some shifts in pheasant concentrations within the state over the past several years. The most evident of these has been the increase in population in parts of southwest and west central Iowa and in some areas of east central Iowa as well. A gradual population decline has been occurring in much of northern Iowa.

The real cause of these long-term changes is the marked decline in the amount of good nesting and winter cover in this part of the state. Studies carried on over the past 30 years on one area in north central Iowa show that many factors have combined to greatly reduce the amount of good habitat for pheasants. The factors include the rapid rate of drainage of slough areas and of wetlands associated with pot-holes and marshes, the clearing or removal of many fencerows, the cleaning out or removal of farm groves, the considerable decrease in harvested oat acreage so important to successful nesting, the earlier mowing of hayfields resulting in destruction of more unhatched nests, and a host of related changes. If pheasants cannot find a suitable place to live, there soon will be fewer birds around.

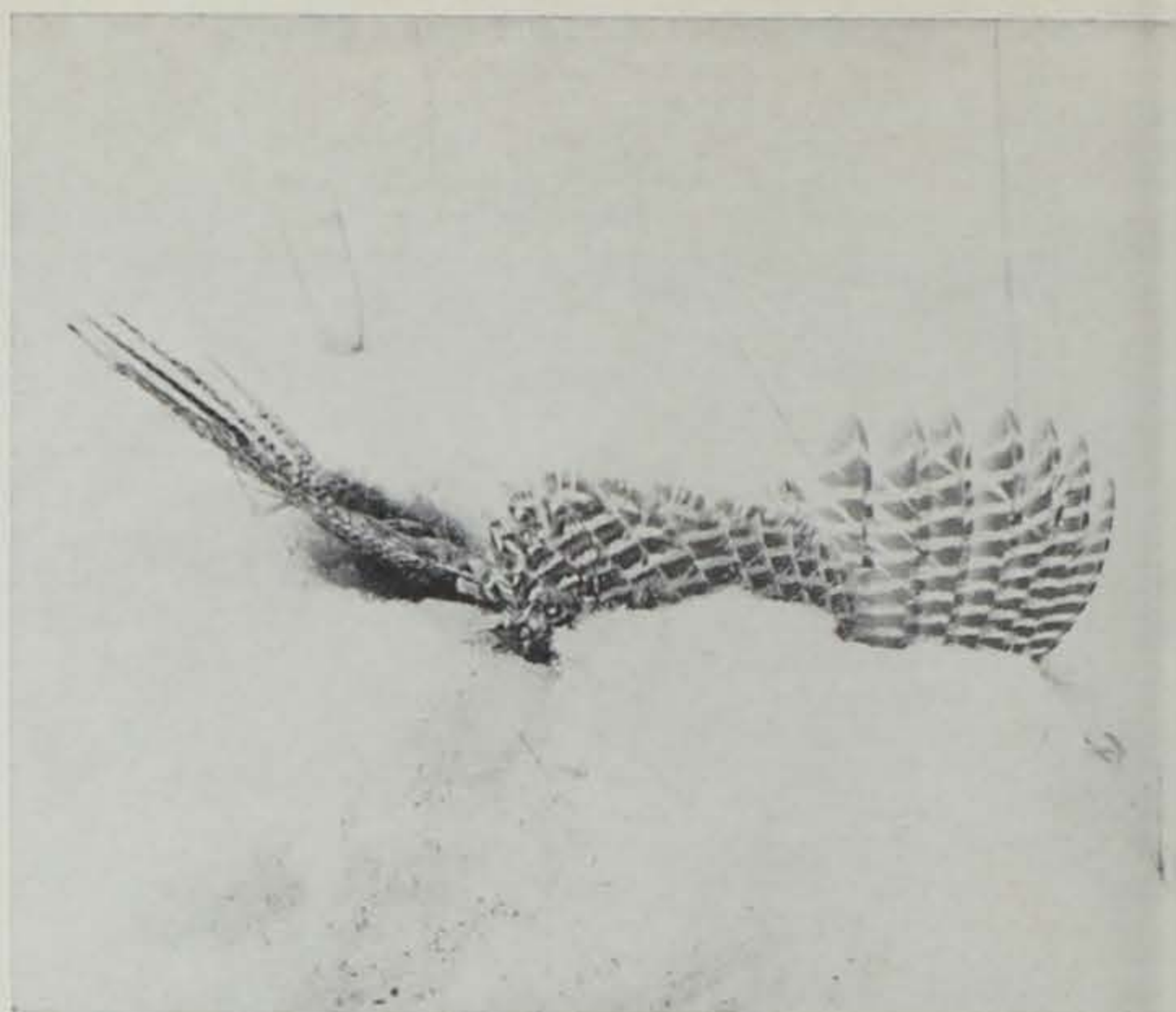
Hunting pressure in parts of southwestern and east central Iowa in recent years has actually been greater than in most of northern Iowa. Yet, pheasant population in these two areas have held their own or even increased. If hunting had any significant effect, the reverse would be expected to occur.

While on the subject of hunting pressure, it should be pointed out that hunters who traditionally go to northern Iowa on opening day and are thinking of changing should not be too eager to do so. Because of



Pheasants need shelter similar to this thick windbreak.

Jim Sherman photo



Jack Kirstein photo

An Iowa winter is the most ruthless enemy faced by pheasants.

the larger number of hunters usually present in the southwestern and east central parts of the state, a new hunter, unacquainted with these areas, might have difficulty finding a good spot to hunt. He could actually have a less rewarding hunt even though he was hunting in an area with more birds.

In the best pheasant range in southwestern Iowa, cock to hen ratio after the hunting season are often around one to 10. Yet, production in this area is as high as anywhere in the state. The rest of the state generally shows a ratio of one cock to three or four hens after the hunting season. This indicates a surplus of cocks is still around when the season closes each year.

The simple fact is that the "law of diminishing returns" goes into effect well before there is any danger of harming the pheasant population. The point at which bagging a rooster becomes so difficult as to discourage all but the most ardent or persistent hunter is reached well in advance of the point at which too many roosters would be removed to guarantee successful reproduction by the hens the next year. This is, in effect, a "built-in safeguard," and the intellectual superiority of the surviving roosters over most of the hunters pursuing them throughout the season must be given due credit!

The biological or reproductive potential of pheasants is such that the birds are capable of bouncing back to levels compatible with the habitat in a short time, if given half a chance by the weather. Weather is the key to short-term fluctuations in pheasant numbers. One must keep in mind that populations of small game, whether pheasants or some other species, are subject to many fluctuations over the years. It is not reasonable to expect hunting to be better every year. A good example of rebuilding from a disastrous winter is the quail population in southern Iowa which suffered severe losses in the winter of 1959-60. Since then, however, the population has rebounded to furnish good hunting during the past couple of years and offers excellent prospect for this fall.

It is very unfortunate that so many people believe pheasant populations can be manipulated solely by altering hunting season regulations. It is an oft-proved point that pheasant hunting has no important effect on the population levels to be expected in succeeding years. People's efforts and energies could better be directed toward improving habitat conditions for the birds—particularly nesting and winter cover. Pheasants in northern Iowa last winter would have gotten far more comfort during the blizzards from a dense farm grove with a couple rows of shrubs around it than from a thin sheet of paper with a few printed regulations on it!

The pheasant hunting season in Iowa is regulated to provide the maximum opportunity for sportsmen to harvest these surplus roosters. Whether a particular area has 300 birds or only 30 this fall, the fact remains that at least 90 percent will be surplus and available for taking by hunters. It is true that hunting would be poorer with only 30 roosters compared to 300, but that in itself is no reason to curtail the opportunity to hunt if one wishes to do so.

This year's reduction in daily bag limit to two cocks and possession limit to six cocks, while maintaining approximately the same length of season as for the past two years, should help to better distribute the smaller number of pheasant roosters available this year among Iowa's 300,000 pheasant hunters.